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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[26 May 2014]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Bahrain Government prevents the right of health

According to the United Nations Special Reporter on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; the right to health is an inclusive right to both freedoms and entitlements. Freedoms include the right to control one's health, and entitlements include the right to a system of health protection (i.e. health care and the underlying determinants of health) that provides equality of opportunity for people to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health.

Since 2011, the government of Bahrain (GOB) has violated such rights by attacking protesters who took to the streets to demand political reform. GOB continuous to attack protesters with: tear gas (Approximately, 70 people have died due to toxic gas inhalation and its consequences;10 kids have died due to head trauma due to tear gas canister straight hit to the head) ; bird shot pallets (killing 100), and other weapons. GOB continuous to detain and torture perceived opponents, and targets health professionals, first aiders who treated protesters.

It all started On 16 March 2011, when the government of Bahrain attacked Salmaniya Medical Complex one of the largest hospitals and the only public hospital in the kingdom. The Government of Bahrain sent its own heavily armed and masked security forces inside hospital wards where they beat, tortured, and interrogated wounded protesters and the medical workers in front of everybody. This started the siege of the hospital with light infantry tanks outside the hospital where torturing and beating of any health team members based on their sect /Shia. They were tortured on the grounds of the hospital (1).This was the start of the militarization of the hospital until our present time.

51 Bahraini Medics (Doctors, nurses, pharmacist, paramedics, and workers in Kitchen hospital) were detained and tortured. 2 left the country prior to the arrest. One Emergency nurse specialist was detained and trialled separately then the group for being a photographer and sentenced to 3 years in prison. He was released march 23rd 2014.

20 of the medics were categorized as felonies and sentenced from 5-15 years in prison by the military court and then 9 of them were sentenced by the civil courts from 2 months-5 years. And the other nine were acquitted. The other 28 were categorized as misdemeanours and got acquitted. This resulted in sacking nine medics from the hospital and 8 returned to work in September 2012 and one 14th April 2014.

At the present time, Dr. Ali AL-Ekeri /orthopaedic surgeon; graduate of RCSI is in prison and sentenced to 5 years. Mr. Ebrahim Aldemastani /occupational nurse sentenced to 3 years in prison. Both medics were accused of over throwing the monarchy and public gathering.

The attack continued on the medics in Bahrain. December 2013 Sayed Saeed Al-Alawi / nursing assistance was detained for nine months and then sentenced to 15 years in prison. Accused of being part of a religious soldiers

According to article 14 and The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at the United Nation Human Right Council; the states parties have to refrain from denying or limiting equal access for all persons, including prisoners or detainees, minorities, and abstain from enforcing discriminatory practices as a State policy.(2)

Over the past 3years the Government of Bahrain has denied a largely Shia segment of its population these rights, resulting in widespread fear among many who seek medical treatment. Due to the ongoing presence of State security forces inside Salmaniya Hospital; the systematic interrogation of incoming patients and visitors, and the subsequent beating, detention, and prosecution of many Shia who are suspected of having participated in street protests.

A memorandum of understanding was circulated among all governmental and non-governmental hospitals by the National Authority Health Regulatory (NAHR) headed by Dr. Baha Fatiha stating that: Anyone presenting with physical wounds; or burns; or suspected teargas-related injury or any signs of trauma or fractured boned should be reported to the high official and is brought to security forces inside Salmaniya Hospital for further interrogation. It does not stop at that, this also included anyone driving a wounded protester Salmaniya Hospital is suspect, and one such

person was even accused of having caused the injury. Throughout the hospital, there are now 400 newly installed security cameras operated by the Ministry of Interior.[1]

The result of that was integrating injured protesters whom were brought alive to the hospital which ended dead due to prioritizing interrogation to treatment by the security forces such as Mr. Ebrahim Yagob whom was run over by the riot police, got detained and transferred to the hospital because he was complaining of shortness of breath and sever pain in the abdomen while being interrogated. His treatment was further delayed due to arguments among doctors! He collapsed and died due to massive abdominal bleed. (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlftZscfbhQ)

Martyr Ahmed Abdul Ameer (15 years), was severely burned due to burns incident in a warehouse on Saturday (November 30, 2013). The ministry of Interior forces deliberately refused to allow the ambulance to enter the area of Sanabis west of the Bahraini capital Manama to help him, which led to delay in treatment and the family had to transfer him in a blanket and then in a car to get him to the ambulance which was parked far away from the victim. This had lead in serious deterioration in his health. He was short of breath but was interrogated upon his arrival to the hospital. This had lead into his death due to delay in transferring the victim and integrated him while being completely unstable.

On the 29th of April 2014; Mr. Hassan Mahmood was shot by bird pallets shot gun in his shoulder. He was transferred to SMC emergency room hospital then transferred to the Police fort. He needed to stay for observation and clearing prior to going to fort hospital.

There are so many prisoners without any medical treatments. According to family members, families are requested by the Pardon of Jail to bring prisoners and detainees medications. Some families complain that their detainee siblings didn't receive the medication that they have delivered to them.

Prisoners are transferred to the hospital while being insulted and humiliated! They are handcuffed on arrival and on assessment by the doctors. Even if they going to be admitted they will be handcuffed. A recent example is Mr. Mohammed AlDaqaq a sickle cell disease patient is handcuffed while having suckling crisis in both joints of his hands! He has the right for treatment according to Geneva Convention 1948 and according to High Commissioner for Human rights documents/Health and prisoners.
(ohchr.org, 2005)[2]

There is an immediate need to call for suspension of the use of this toxic gas because of its suspected severe health impact on the population. There is an increase rate of spontaneous abortion and miscarriages due to toxic tear gas. According to BCHR reports, 21 cases of miscarriage or spontaneous abortion that occurred between Mar-Nov 2011 were reported. 67% of the cases were due to excessive use of toxic gases, tear gas and other forms, whether as a means of suppressing a protest or attacking a whole area / collective punishments. For further details[3] of cases please see (Rights, December 2011)

In summary:

The Bahraini government has signed different treaties and member of the Human Right Council of Human rights but does not respect the element and the issue of right to health. We call upon the High Commissioner of Human Rights to:

1. Cease the militarization's of the Hospitals
2. End impunity attacks on Health workers and first aiders in Bahrain
3. Dismiss all charges against the 52 medical workers and reinstate their positions in public medical facilities
4. Void the convictions of three medical workers currently imprisoned
5. Immediately suspend the use of toxic tear gas because of its suspected severe health impact on the population
6. Cease excessive use of force against Shia neighborhoods and civilian protesters in violation of the rights of Bahraini citizens to assemble and peacefully protest.

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[2] http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/training11Add3en.pdf
[3] Bahrain: Miscarriage And Spontaneous Abortion Cases As A Result For The Excessive Use Of Tear Gas And Violence